Vagabond Rhymes

By

A. Idler

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BY

AN IDLER

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DEDICATION.

To My Father.

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AT TWILIGHT.

Never yet have eyes
  Thrilled me through like thine.
Oh, 'tis Paradise
  To touch thy lips with mine.

When the twilight waning
  Leaves the mountains dun,
And the sea complaining
  Calleth for the sun,

Then love's subtle essence
  Worketh its sweet charm;
I sun me in thy presence
  And feel my heart grow warm.

O love, thou art my day;
  Rain down thy beams on me.
Oh, 'twere heaven on earth, May,
  To spend my life with thee.

DISTRUST.

"What shall I show you," the Spirit
  said,
As he looked in my face and smiled;

"From the land of the living or land
of the dead,
What shall it be, my child?"

Pale in its glory the moonlight dreamed,
Softening the light of his eyes;
Oh, a radiant light from his presence
streamed,
And hushed were the summer skies.

"Never a sight from the east to the
west,
From the sky to the restless sea,
From the snow-crowned Alp to a
robin's nest,
Can ever escape from me.

The deep, deep heart of the deepest
mine,
Or the wandering thoughts of a bird,
The silent growth of the northern pine,—
You have but to say the word."

Within my restless, eager heart
A hundred longings woke;
But I turned where the Spirit stood
apart,
And the strongest impulse spoke.

"Show me his heart whom I call my
love;
Show me his very soul;
Be it false, or true as the heaven above.
Come, I would know the whole."

The Spirit turned; his unfathomed eyes
Looked full into my own;
Was it pain, or pity, or surprise?
But the risk was mine alone.

"But think a moment," he slowly said:
"A human heart laid bare
Is a fearful thing; are you not afraid?"
And his touch was on my hair.

O, you who have felt the thronging
rush
Of the thoughts that scorn control,
Know well that no warning voice can
hush
The wild cry of the soul.

And though gentler whispers shyly
spoke,
And trust from its throne said "Nay,"
My heart from its soft confinement
broke,
And said, "I will have my way."

* * * * * * *

I held my breath, then turned to see
A human heart's deep mystery.
As in a mirror I saw there
The heart of my true love laid bare.
Ah, mighty love was but a part
Of that great living, quivering heart;
Passions and thoughts I had not dreamed
At home amid its windings seemed;
Desires and high ambitions thronged
The heart that unto love belonged.
But, kindling over all, a glow
That colder natures never know,
Illumined all with its warm light—
The fireside of his heart was bright—
The glow from Love's own glorious
throne;
The form enshrined there was my own.
And yet the glance of other eyes
That once had made his Paradise,
Had left the ashes of their fires
To show, not Love, but Like expires.
Here tenderness enwrapped his soul;
There mighty passions scorned control;
And storms I quivered but to see
Swept o'er his heart tumultuously.
Ambition burned within his breast,
And love, with all its sweet unrest.

My heart forgot its jealousy
To see that glorious pageantry
Of noble thought and lofty plan,
Of love toward God and help for man;
Deep musing o'er the world's great past;
Glances on things forbidden cast;
Of strong resolve, of burdens borne
Of which none ever knew the thorn;
Of ponderings over problems deep;
Of wearyings for death's sweet sleep;
Of glad delight in life; of dreams
Whose magical, enchanting gleams
Flash out and fade, dying at birth;
Whose home, like ours, is not the earth.

Breathless indeed, I bowed my head.
Better than my own heart, I said,
I know my dear love's noble heart.
How have I ever made a part
Of all that wide and grand domain?
And Oh, the shame and bitter pain
Of choosing not to trust, but see;
Of disregarding privacy.
Love, knewest thou I'd unveiled thy shrine,
Couldst thou forgive that look of mine?

* * * * * * *

His step; and all my pulses start;
His voice makes music in my heart;
And one great storm of shame and bliss
Comes with the rapture of his kiss.
Were ever lover's eyes so true!
O love, that I had trusted you!

A MURDERER TO THE SPECTRE OF THE OLD YEAR.

Thou'rt dead, Old Year, what dost thou here?
Thou'rt woven in the story
Of a living heart, whose pulses start
At this spectre of by-gone glory.
Old year, thou'rt dead, why lift thy head
To mock at thy former glory?

Thou'rt dead, Old Man; thy death groan ran
Through a midnight's shuddering stroke.
'Twas thy last pulse-beat, and thy faint life-heat

Burnt out as the new year broke.
I whispered a shout as thy life went out,
And smiled as the New Year woke.

When thou wert young as the year new sprung
From eternity's dread womb,
I hailed thy birth with a heartier mirth
Than e'er, in the years to come,
I shall know, when close on a year's death throe
A New Year's steps shall come.

When I hailed thy birth I was glad as earth
On her creation morn;
Ere thy death I hail, goes up a wail
Like that when sin was born.
Whilst thou drew breath, in living death
My awful crime was born.

The smiling morn when thou wert born
Gave to me love and glory.
Ere the night-chime tolled thy death time
Earth held an awful story;
The harsh wind wailed and the oak tree quailed
And the stars paled at the story.

The forest wild my guilt beguiled;
I thought its awful moaning,
The strong wind's crash through the rustling ash
Would drown an old man's groaning.
Old Year, thou'st sighed like him who died—
O, Heaven! his awful groaning!

His hair was white as thine to-night,
Old Year, where thou liest dead;
Thou dost lift thine eyes,—when an old man dies
Does he still lift up his head?
When I struck the blow that laid him low
Why did he lift his head?

Still is it dead, that old white head
With the slow blood dripping down?
The red stain's part of my own red heart,
Yet its red sea will not drown
The awful thought of the deed I wrought
When I struck the old man down.

Was that thy shriek, or but the creak
Of the ages' closing door
On this last dead year? O, grim and sere,

Art thou dead forevermore?
Hell seal thy tomb; yet my heart has room
For thy memory evermore.

The echoes curst of his last outburst
Forever and ever roll;
And that red blood's rust, though the heart be dust,
Eats into my inmost soul.
O echoing call! O red blood's fall!
O ruined, ruined soul.

I stifled pain as once and again
Thou didst beg thy life from me.
Now thou wilt not go, though thou dost know
How I plead for liberty,—
For an empty heart and a night apart
From that frightful memory.

The old year dies, but thy haunting eyes
Close not with the waning year;
The glad young morn brings the year new-born,
But for me it holds no cheer.
My deed is done; ere the set of sun
I shall follow my fatal year.

One year? O fool! Eternity's school
Can never be so long
As each dragging night, when, mad for light,
I watched for the first bird's song;
Then cursed the dawn and wished it gone,
As the slow day crept along.

Could the vision die from my soul's strained eye,
Could my mad heart hear no more
The hoarse, wild cry of thine agony,
I could rest forevermore.
But I would not spare, why shouldst thou care
That my heart rests nevermore.

My hot brain whirls; are there other worlds
Where all tortured hearts forget?
Oh, must I be I, though the years roll by—
Shall I see thy struggle yet?
Revenge is thine, O victim mine,
Thou dost triumph o'er me yet.

What did I say when I used to pray—
Forgive us, O God, each debt,

As we forgive—Ah, did I let him live
When he prayed with lips blood-wet?
My lips are dumb; O madness, come,
For earth and hell have met.

I have watched for thee; dost thou come for me?
On the trail of the dying year
Thy slow step creeps from the mystic deeps
Where mad souls disappear;
From the sockets bare of the dead man there
Thy filmy eyes appear.

I see thee now; on thy wrinkled brow
The seal of my crime is set.
Why dost thou stand with uplifted hand
And beard with the red blood wet?
Thou beckon'st me; I go with thee.
Canst make my heart forget?

Not faint and slow, though thy hair be snow;
Red eyes, I will not flee;
Bring the old dead year, and my victim here,
To walk along with thee.

Grim Death doth come, with his muffled drum,
To walk among the three.

THE BOHEMIAN.*

I have the whole world for my home;
Rare, wide fields for me to roam
Stretch themselves beyond my view,
Beckoning me to wanderings new;
Even the horizon's bound
Cannot clasp my meadows round.
The wide sky, my arching roof,
And the grass, an emerald woof,
Compass in their glorious sweep
Beauties given to their keep—
Given in trust for the free heart
That makes them of itself a part.
The universe is for the sake
Of him who can reach out and take.
The sunshine is my breath of life,
The winds are with my music rife,
The birds sing to express my glee,
And the cloud frescoes are for me.
Ye who would live in ecstacy,
Come and share my home with me.

Many a secret I have caught
From the lips of Nature, taught
When I drew so close to her
That I felt her heart's warm stir.
The white stars have dropped a light
On the secret ways of night
That one who caught not the swift glance
Would think unmeaning radiance.
Oriel windows of the sunrise
Open outlooks to the far skies;
Glowing portals of the sunset
Flash forth glories but half-dreamed yet—
Glories bright though vanishing
As the sweep of seraph's wing.
If you would all these glories see,
Come and make your home with me.

The half-formed ring of gorgeous dyes
Spans for me the April skies;
Butterflies unfold their wings
To bear my thoughts like precious things;
Rarest flowers their perfumes bear
To the breeze that lifts my hair;
Humming birds my ears surprise
With a word from Paradise;

Blooms of Spring I love to breathe
As I stand their sweets beneath
And so I chase the enchanted time
From summer clime to summer clime,
Still following a wayward will;
A magic halo 'round me still.
If such scenes flash before your eyes
Rainbow peeps of Paradise,
  Ask Bohemia's child to show
  How you may such pleasures know.

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* Published several years ago in the *Tribune*.

MY ONLY LOVE.

My only love, my only love,
  How fair thy cherished image grows;
But one real glimpse of thee would prove
  Like sunrise over Alpine snows.

My only love; the thought of thee
  Wears deep into my longing heart.
Why art thou not with me, with me,
  And how could hands so loving part?

The day is but a sigh for thee;
  The night a dream that thou art here;

But morning brings reality,
And tired night the hopeless tear.

Where art thou now, my pearl of worth,
And is thy loving thought with me?
While mine goes wandering o'er the earth
To seek for thee, to seek for thee.

Cannot my longing draw thee, love,
Home to my very heart of hearts?
Come to my waiting arms and prove
What warmth and vigor love imparts.

Pray thou to heaven, and I will pray;
When our prayers meet before the throne
Will not high heaven find a way
To give to waiting love his own?

My only love! The thought of thee
Is all of heaven my life has known;
Were thy face bending over me
The world might pass; I'd have my own.

My only love! My only love!
Thou art my music, thou my light.

O wild, bright strain, come back and
prove
That morning cometh after night.

"WATCHMAN, TELL US OF THE NIGHT."*

Watchman, what of the night?
Say, does the morning dawn?
Is there a streak of light?
Or does the night go on
Farther and farther stretching down
Into the midnight's blackest frown?

Watchman, what of the night?
What of the coming day?
Is there a struggling light
Casting a doubtful ray?
Is there a gleam of hope? Oh, say,
Is there a glimmer of coming day?

Watchman, what of the night?
We are in valleys low;
You, on the mountain height,
Can catch the first, faint glow;
Signal us when the longed-for light
Flashes its way through the waiting
night.

Watchman, what of the night?
No sign o'er the far-off hills?
No faintest rim of light
The dark horizon fills?
No hint of dawn from the silent heaven?
No sun-lit peak? No twilight, even?

Watchman, what of the night?
In my heart the shadows fall.
Fair Hope has taken flight,
The heavens are her pall.
Smothering Despair has folded wing,
And broods o'er every earthly thing.

Watchman, what of the night?
A light! a light! you say?
'Tis but the moon's pale light,
'Tis but a star's faint ray,
'Tis but a mock of the long delay,
'Tis—O watchman is it the *day*?

Watchman, what of the day?
Does it glint the night-cold hills?
Has't come? I pray you say.
Oh, shout till echo thrills.
'Tis come, at last I hear you say.
My soul lies wrapped in endless day.

---

* Published several years ago in the *Standard*.

A MEMORY.

Once when you stood in lover's mood,
The summer air around us glistening—
"Sweet, you are not afraid?" you said:
"Your shy lips quiver at love's christening."

Though months have gone I hear your tone;
I see your look, your full lips parted.
When such thoughts come of voices dumb -
The warm tide leaves us too full-hearted.

Now sleeping well where no lips tell
How achingly, my love, I miss you,
Cold and away, my heart's loved day,
The dumb roots of the lilies kiss you.

GOOD NEWS.

A little bird of air
Whispered a song to me;

The day grew wondrous fair,
The trees waved gleefully;
And happy words came bubbling to my lips;
And on the sea of dreams I launched a hundred ships.

Would'st know the song he sang?
Perhaps no song to thee.
But oh, for me it rang
A hundred bells of glee.
To-day for me uncloses
A flower of joy to come;
When June comes with its roses
My darling will come home.

THE WOMAN'S SIDE.

So you were only playing with me
laughing between the acts
To see how I took the play for truth,
and all your jests for facts.
A woman's heart for a plaything, Sir,
does it serve your purpose well?
What if 'twere crushed in the playing;
why, a woman dare not tell.

In the play of hearts, in fairness, Sir,
there surely should be two;
Yet that but one was playing here,
wakes only mirth in you.
Did you keep your heart for better
things? I know 'tis safest so;
It may be you never had a heart, or lost
it long ago.

Oh, once I had a girl's soft heart, Sir;
but that seems long, long since;
And a childish dream I remember, of
finding my fairy Prince.
But the deepest love can change to
scorn, and scorn is a hard, hard
test;
And the knowledge of your baseness
came to crown your bitter jest.

Oh, doubt and scorn to a heart that's
loved, wormwood they are, and
gall;
And love and the lover both a dream, is
the saddest lot of all.
No tender memories linger to keep
human and soft and brave
The heart that cherished a shadow love,
—a shadow claims no grave.

Go laugh at your jest o'er the wine cup;
tell it to careless friends.
A "Bravo, my boy, another now,"
will make you full amends.
Laugh at the woman you trifled with;
but ever while life endures,
In my soul's deep echoless caverns my
laugh shall answer yours.

You laugh at the careless breaking of
an innocent girl's heart;
At her guilelessness in trusting one
who only played a part;
You laugh at your skill in trickery; at
the pleasure 'twas to see
A girl's cheek flush at your approach,
the while your thoughts were free.

I laugh at the bitter knowledge that a
woman's soul can be
Parted from all sweet trustfulness by a
wide eternity.
I laugh at myself, at you, at heaven;—
but a woman's scorn is weak.
No need to fear for yourself, brave Sir;
a woman may not speak.

DAVID BEFORE SAUL

Rest thy heart, O mighty King.
Let thy servant David sing
  All thy soul to lull.
Cease, O King, to be distressed,
While the land which thou hast blest,
  With thy praise is full.

I remember how thy word—
Stronger than another's sword—
  Put our foes to flight;
And thy mighty son didst make
All the bold Philistines quake,
  As they felt him smite.

Shall not God who helped thee fight
Wrap thee still about with might?
  Oh, exult in God!
Doth thy sin, O King, avail
Still to make thy strong heart quail,
  Lest 'tis Israel rod?

Once as I my father's sheep
On Judea's hill did keep,
  Came a lion there,

Hungry for the sweet lamb's blood;
But I smote him where he stood,
  Through my God's strong care.

God is strong to conquer still;
Offer up thy kingly will;
  Cry for strength to drive
All the lion of thy sin
From its lair, thy heart within,
  And save thy soul alive.

Thou shalt find a sweeter bed,
With his foot upon thy head,
  O thou mighty King,
Than upon another's breast,
In Jehovah's strength is rest.
  Thou his praise wilt sing.

LILIES OF THE VALLEY.

  Those tiny, fragrant bells,
  How soft their music swells
Ringing across the fields of memory.
  My heart responding thrills,
  With pain and rapture fills,
And dreams o'er the Has Been and the
    To Be.

That fairy melody,
Pregnant with thoughts for me,
What gives it power to stir my being so?
Ah, there's no power can move
Like the strange power of love,
And love has linked the flower to long ago.

In happy childhood days
This flower could fix my gaze
And fill my childish heart with mute delight;
So childish fancy weaves
A charm about its leaves
And lends a glamor to its own pure white.

That careless, merry time
Comes back in the soft chime
Of these sweet lilies, now so wondrous fair.
In childlike faith I kneel,
And once again I feel
A gentle hand slow wandering o'er my hair.

Now summer's violets grow,
And winter's tempests blow
Above that loving hand whose love was power.

But this sweet flower's breath
Has bridged the gulf of death
And given me back an angel for this hour.

Another memory weaves
Its spell around thy leaves,
O mystic flower, high thronéd in my heart.
Thy flowers were the last
From severing hands that passed,
When one dear friend from her she loved must part.

O faithful friend and true,
My thoughts reach out to you,
Borne on the fragrance of a tiny flower.
O precious bond of love,
True as the heaven above,
Our souls may meet, joined by that wondrous power.

Though deep seas roll between,
And years must intervene
Before I hear thy voice, beloved, again,
Thy spirit answers mine,
My soul is close to thine;
The witchery of a flower binds like a chain.

Ah, Heaven! another love
Its close-linked chain has wove
About these lustrous, pure, clear-ringing bells;
A love that fills the earth,
That has in heaven its birth,
Looks back to heaven, and greater heaven foretells.

O bells that skyward reach
God's purity to teach,
"Consider us," thy fragrant breaths exhale:
"To you His care we show
That you no care may know."
He feeds among the lilies of the vale.

THE WOOING OF THE WATERS.

Come, come.
My waves are a cradle, as dainty-sweet
As ever felt the touch of feet.
Softly, softly, I lull to sleep.
O give yourself to me to keep,
I'll keep you safe.
Come.

Come, come.
My waves are lovers, more fond and true
Than ever whispered vows to you.
Then trustfully bend down and meet
The low waves pleading at your feet.
I'll love you so.
Come.

Come, come.
My heart is a tempest that roars in me;
Come make of it a summer sea.
Clearly, sweetly, as crystals ring,
The sea its gratitude shall sing.
I'll sing for you.
Come.

Come, come.
My waves are harp strings, and every wave
Shall give the music you so crave.
I'll blow my winds through all my shells,
Till sound her deep heart-secret tells
For you, my love.
Come.

Come, come,
I'll stir my echoes that wander free
To catch heaven's sweetest poetry,

Till tunefully the waves repeat
A poem more than earthly sweet.
Will you not come?
Come.

Come, come.
I know thy impulse; why not yield?
Your eyes your longings have revealed.
Loving, trustful, come down to me,
Into the wide arms of the sea.
I'll fold you close.
Come.

Come, come.
My waves are a haven where you may rest,
No more by vague, vain dreams oppressed.
Hear how the winds my love repeat;
Oh, listen to their music sweet.
I'll give you rest.
Come.

Come, come.
Oh, hear the waters, as, pure and clear,
They murmur music in your ear.
Sweetly, sweetly, they tell of rest.

Then lay your cheek down on my
breast.
I'll give you peace.
Come.

MY DEAD.

Soft came the moaning from the east;
Sweet sang the birds at dawn.
The music in my heart had ceased;
My life's sweet light was gone.

O my heart's love! No answering look
From those fixed, half-shut eyes.
God grant me but a little nook
By his, in Thy wide skies.

His lips are dumb at my caress,
'Twas never so before.
God, show a Father's tenderness,
Make room for one soul more.

Some spirit, made of air and love,
Today grant me thy place;
Still in his presence would I move,
And see his living face,

And hear his voice; 'twould thrill my heart
Above the angel choirs—
His low "my love!"—till tears would start,
And quench my heart's mad fires.

O God! my love! must Thou take him
Who 'round my heart has grown,
When all thy sweet-voiced seraphim
Stand ready at Thy throne?

How couldst Thou let one human heart
Unto another mate,
Till it grew of itself a part,
Then leave it desolate.

No answer from the cruel heaven?
Comes there no second dawn?
To hearts the fair, sweet day is given,
And then the night comes on.

O human heart, too mad, too hot,
Too finite, to see true,
Your love he knows; have you forgot?
Your Father knoweth, too.

His love is greater far than yours;
He gives your love His best.

Be yours the love that best endures;
Be his, God's perfect rest.

Selfish! once more the dead lips press.
'Tis human to deplore
That earth should have one sufferer less
And Heaven one singer more.

IN MAY.

The dallying summer lingers yet,
The year's reluctant guest.
The winter could my heart forget,
Perhaps 'twould be at rest.

A year ago my eager heart
Knew nothing but delight.
But now in pain I walk apart,
My sunshine lost in night.

Last summer every light wind stirred
My heart into a song;
I was in love with every bird,
Happy the whole day long.

Joy was my friend; but now, grown shy,
She turns her eyes away.

I thought I wished that I might die
Before the first June day;

But some sweet hope has stirred my heart
In sympathy with spring,
And whispered, joy may be thy part
Before the birds take wing.

SUMMER DAYS.*

O gladness of sweet summer days, that will not leave off singing;
A passion softened into peace; fresh joy forever bringing
To children, mad with mirth, who seem so tireless fond of playing;
To erring souls all tempest-tossed, for whom the Christ is praying.

A breath from Adam's paradise the careless breeze is flinging;
An echo from an angel's harp a joyous bird is singing.
Earth lieth still in restfulness save passing thrills aquiver
As tangled sunbeams knit and break across a mighty river.

Between the tangle of the leaves the
broken sunshine dances;
While, softly dappling all the grass,
the shade its light enhances.
A wealth of fragrance weights the air,
so subtly sweet pervading
That we forget the gentle flowers whose
life it is, are fading.

Oh, earth to us is very sweet when on
her children smiling;
With charming wiles, in varied moods,
our human hearts beguiling.
"Sleep soft," she whispers when we
rest; or, "wake with me to sing-
ing."
And in our hearts her loving call will
never leave off ringing.

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* Published several years ago in the *Tribune*.

THE LISTLESSNESS OF LOVE.

Ah, love, they say, can give sweet tone
To the fond lips of many a one
Who but for love were dumb;

But love, for me, untunes my lyre,
Gives to my wild heart all its fire,
To which words will not come.

I leave my flowers beside the stream,
And pass them in a waking dream,
A wordless trance of love.
My sweetest songs are all unsung,
Though my heart-strings, so tightly strung,
Yearn all this love to prove.

My half-writ poem on the shelf
Sighs down to me, its other self,
Yet looks and sighs in vain;
My listless fingers cannot write,
And so I sit aside to-night
And ponder in the fading light
O'er this delicious pain.

The maidens mock me as they pass
With lightsome footsteps on the grass:
"Ah! she is sick for love."
I scarcely hear their mocking cries;
I see the beauty of his eyes
Bent on me from above.

I hear again his tender tone,
So low, caught by my ear alone;
  His breath is on my lips;
All earth and heaven melt away,
As night is lost in glorious day,
  As suns the stars eclipse.

Ah, might I lie forever here,
While softly whispered in my ear
  I hear love's softest sighs!
Nay, dreams are sweet, but hasten, night,
And bring me, with the morning light,
  The heaven of his eyes.

THE STORM AT NIGHT.

I woke from sweetest wanderings of a dream
  To hear a torrent dashing 'gainst the pane,
The trembling stars drenched by the blinding stream,
  The moonlight drowned and strangled by the rain.
Against the house the helpless branches tossed,—

Tossed wildly, sobbing like a frightened child;
The winds shrieked like the cryings of the lost.
Loud was the storm, and all the night was wild.
And quick, in sheets of flame,
The vivid lightning came
Flashing against the windows, blinding white;
Blind as a human passion,
When, deaf to all compassion,
It will but strike, and strike with all its might.

The thunder rolled incessant, grandly deep,
With sullen threatenings as it died away,
And burst again with the dread lightning's leap,
Till earth was lit as with the glare of day,
And deafened by such sounds as might have broken
Over the listening worlds at Adam's sin,

When God the awful curse had sternly spoken,
And bade the angel guard the gates within.
The lurid lightning's flash,
That cut, with widening gash,
The breathing darkness, circling 'round the earth,
Turned, like that sword's dread glare
Which pierced the darkening air
And lit with terror sin's most awful birth.

And as the thunder deepened in its flight
I heard the cursings of that rebel host
That, exiled, fell from fairest living light
Into the deepest midnight darkness tossed,
That yawned to welcome them, as black-browed clouds
Delight to swallow up the evening stars;
For these were angels once, these exile crowds,

And gladly Hell her creaking door unbars.
It hurt me to draw breath;
I thought upon that death—
Death—naught but Hell knows all that dreadful word.
And still the storm without
Raged, every breath a shout
That echoed back until all Heaven seemed stirred.

Fierce warred the elements, as angels warred,
God's angels 'gainst the hosts of Lucifer,
When fell that prince of ingrates, evil-starred;
God's angels watching with indignant stir.
Hush! hear their falling in the rustling leaves,
Grown softer as the distance gathers length;
And as the reaper gathers in his sheaves
So Hell receives that shattered rebel strength.
And as the thunder dies
Adown the brightening skies,

Closer now in the darkness, grey toward
Heaven,
The sound of teardrops falling,
And angel voices calling
To Eden's exiles, sinning yet forgiven.

In gradual calm the storm-clouds rolled
away;
And but the hushéd sobbing of the
night,
Or gleam of raindrops in the lightning's
play,
Told of the strife and struggle since
the light.
The darkness lifted into dawn's cool
grey,
The shadows fled away as if fierce
driven,
And soft and faint, the first pale light
of day
Came creeping shyly up the eastern
heaven.
And just above that light,
As on the brow of night,
There hung the glory of the morning
star;
That fair star, once the crowning
Of him, the son of morning,

Whose self-discrowning taught the
heavens war.

Now doubly lustrous in its calm, pure
peace,
The mighty Victor claims it for His
own.
But see! the signs of coming day in-
crease,
The starlight pales, the clouds of
night have flown.
A blush has swept across the first white
thrills,
The light the birds have clamored
for has come,
The day is waiting on the eastern hills,
The voices of the night and storm are
dumb.
And soft, if mortal sense
Could bridge the void immense,
Earth might have heard the angels
singing clear.
Then smiled the Infinite,
Bending from loftiest height.
The stormy night was o'er; the morn
was here.

FOR M——.

When the nightingale loves the rose
He can tell his love in song.
But must I be dumb, my love,
When I have loved so long?

Could my voice vie with his singing,
My rose, I would haste to woo;
But I have but a tripping human tongue—
Will just "I love you" do?

THE MONK'S DEATH.

I am dying, they say.
If it were but the earth slipping 'way from my grasp,
That the heavens might fill up my hungering clasp,
Would I cling, do you think, to this sin-spotted earth
If I knew that this death were a glorious birth?

If I knew! but, ah me!
They told me that I should find rest for my soul;
That the wild waves of doubt would all harmlessly roll
Against the great Church; and once folded within
There would slip off forever the fetters of sin.

They have cheated thee, Soul.
They told thee that, once turn thy back upon earth,
Strangle down its sweet yearningness, know but its dearth,
And the glories of Heaven should dawn on thy sight,
And thy poor human darkness be flooded with light.

Oh, their promise was smooth;
"Pray the saints who shall importune Heaven for thee;
To the Pope and the Church bend a reverent knee;
And Mary, the Mother, shall be thy great guide
When thou comest to die."—But, O Soul, they have lied.

I have fasted and prayed.
I have kept down the flesh, I have fasted until
The frail body was scarcely the breath of the will.
"The fast of the body"— these sounds how they roll
Familiarly on—"is the feast of the soul."

O my soul, how it pains
To go back o'er the terrible struggle and strain,
The agonized wrestling—O God, all in vain!
Heart-sickening to struggle, wrapped 'round with the night,
When I would have died for a glimmer of light.

Pray the saints, do they say?
If heaven could be taken by storm, it were mine.
But those saints live too far; and then—are they divine?
They were men when they lived on earth, now are they more?
Did they step into holier selves, leaving our shore?

O the light! holy light!
It has flooded the earth with its glorious blaze,
Oh, why should the soul wander dark through the maze
Of the spiritual world? Would to God that a part
Of earth's sunlight were starlight, at least, to the heart.

By strict penance and prayer,
By unfaltering obedience, limitless trust,
By the struggle in darkness, bowed down to the dust,
By confession, by fasting, by groping the way,
We may—slip from the lash of the Judge in "that Day."

Oh, cry shame on such life!
If this be so barren, how shall that life be
So flooded with glory as God's life must be?
The stars would grow pale shining down through such air,
And closing their eyes, to us no light were there.

And how frail is their hope.
Do they lean on confession? Who knows he's confessed?
Down beneath all his probing a dark sin may rest.
And how shall man walk through life's whirlwind unthrilled,
And carry a brimming cup not to be spilled?

O monks, vain is your faith.
The dear Mother of God cannot help you, for light
Cannot flow from her garments to pierce through your night.
Till light falls on your midnight path how can you know
The help you can reach for, the way you must go?

But my spirit is stirred
By a new hope, like sunlight seen soft through the mist;
Does it come from the land which God's noonlight has kissed?
There has flashed o'er my heart like a dream-recalled word—
"I have loved with eternal love." Soul, hast thou heard?

You are dizzy, my Soul,
With the new light poured on you; with joy in the song
That is sweeping in music my heart-strings along.
Oh, I have been blind. He has loved? Ay, He *died*.
Can any love more than the great Crucified?

O my brothers, at last
The light has flashed on us. How blind we have been.
Let us shake off forever the black hood of sin.
Was there fog on our reason that we could not know
If the Mother were holy the Son made her so?

Did He need her strong prayers
To be pitiful unto the souls He had loved
With such marvellous love as His dying had proved?
Did the old belief blind me that I could not see

What the new light shows clearly—
Christ's great love for me?

Oh, just for one hour!
For one fresh leap of strength through my frame as of old,
That I might the new revelation unfold
To the monks who have walked through the darkness with me,
That the light Jesus wraps me in, they, too, might see.

Oh, to cry to all men
That the Christ is the Saviour, the great shining Light,
Ay, the Love who has died for us; the Infinite
Who is mighty to save, and the Loving One, full
Of strong yearning o'er men, and love ineffable.

But already my lips
Have grown stiff with the touch of his messenger, death;
And the mist o'er my eyes gathers damp from his breath.
But He whose eternal love passes man's thought,

Will save in His own way the souls
His blood bought.

Strange, wonderful light!
Growing brighter as earth grows more misty and far.
Our light is the love of Jesus, the Eastern Star.
Ah, death wraps 'round me close, but its shadows have flown.
O Christ, O Thou Crucified, take home Thine own.

"Let there be light"—the deep, full melody
Went thrilling through all space and time and night.
Then first awakened earthly harmony,
The universe responded; there was light.
And ever since, through space that felt and wondered,
Have music's ever-widening circles run;
And the struck harp string quiveringly has pondered
How such delight from such a pain was won.

Still the vibration of those mighty
words
Has trembled through the ages tune-
fully.
Still has its music touched a myriad
chords
And sent the sound along tumultuously.
So sweet and powerful went the
sound along,
Its echo lingers yet in human song.

NOVEMBER.

A vague and restless yearning
Comes pulsing like a wave
At Indian Summer's burning—
The bloom on summer's grave.

The rustle of the dead leaves
Is like a ghostly moan;
The still, sad air its spell weaves
To make one feel alone.

O heart, be still thy throbbing;
What stirs in thee such pain?
That gust was like the sobbing
Of souls that love in vain.

The slumbering air listens
  In indolent suspense;
The dreaming sunlight glistens;
  The waiting is intense.

And slowly through the silence
  The ghostly rustle creeps;
As ocean, 'mid its islands,
  Their waiting shores upleaps.

This is no springtime gladness;
  No summer's dream of calm;
The year is in its sadness,
  And this its funeral psalm.

O woman, in thy sorrow,
  'Tis thine to understand.
Earth holds for thee no morrow;
  Life's key resists thy hand.

The dream of love is over;
  The glimpse of rapture fled;
And Hope, like thy lost lover,
  Lies in thy bosom, dead.

But oh, the hopeless sorrow!
  And oh, the voiceless pain!
The loathing of the morrow
  That brings thy woe again.

Oh, shall it have no ending?
How bitter is that cry—
This pain my heart is rending;
Would God that I might die.

Sad heart, forget thy crying.
The envied dying year
Is radiant even in dying.
Hold'st thou not glory dear?

Thy tears should be but lenses
Through which release is seen.
Quicken thy languid senses
To meet death like a queen.

Oh, hush thy frenzied sobbing,
That loving voice to hear:—
Tired heart, too wildly throbbing,
Sleep with the dying year.

DELIGHT.

Do you know why today
With such sweetness is full,
Why the birds sing alway,
With never a lull?
I know, oh, I know it,
Sweet birth of delight;

Dear nature doth show it
In fulness of light.

My cup runneth over;
My lips brim with song;
My love and my lover
Have made my heart strong.
To-day by the river
That mirrors the heaven,
My love—bravest giver—
His troth-plight has given.

Oh, still was the river,
And stiller the noon.
Such stillness will ever
My quick heart attune.
My heart beat so thickly
I heard its sweet pain—
Then words whispered quickly,
And whispered again:

"I love thee! I love thee!"
O musical tune.
With soft skies above me
And days warm with June,
With heart brimming over
With sweetness and bliss,
With love and my lover—
Is life more than this?

Jesus, be my Life, my Lover;
Be my inmost soul.
With Thyself my poor self cover,
Make my spirit whole.

Be my heart, my kingly Lover,
So that when I bend
To my heart, I shall discover
'Tis my heavenly Friend.

MY LOVE.

Was ever maiden so beguiled
Into a net of her own weaving?
How could I know love was so wild,
And traitor hearts were so deceiving?

I never cared a thought for him;
We talked in merest play and jesting;
And now today my eyes are dim;
My storm-tossed heart can know no resting.

I knew his heart was never mine.
Heedless of love in song and story,
I laughing said: "Lo, my heart's shrine
Its hero lacks; its crowning glory.

Without him, what are heavenliest
gleams?"
And so I crowned him king, in play-
ing;
He waved his sceptre o'er my dreams,
He went where'er my thoughts went
straying.

And day and night, in childish glee,
My thoughts and fancies 'round him
winding—
Fate held my eyes; I could not see
My chains of mist would soon be
binding.

For he about whose shadow-self
My heart its pliant fibres twisted,
Like giant grown from careless elf,
Sprang up and would not be resisted.

Too blissful dream! too rude the thrill
That shook my heart to dazed awak-
ing.
My love was real; it rules me still.
O God! my woman's heart is break-
ing.

DOUGLAS.

My heart sighs for love of thee,
Douglas.
Thou who art so lost to me,
Douglas.
Low the blood-red sun goes down,
Leaving on my page its frown,
Thee to gild with morning's crown,
Douglas.

Wide the sea between us flows,
Douglas.
In and out the slow tide goes,
Douglas.
It is ebb tide on my shore,
But on thine forevermore
Flood tide thunders up the shore,
Douglas.

I am glad thy path is bright,
Douglas.
I could bear my own in night,
Douglas,
If, though for a little space,
Heaven should grant me sweetest grace—
Just to look upon thy face,
Douglas.

Is thy heart in love again,
Douglas?
Does another feel that pain,
Douglas,
Dear, delicious, longing pain—
Silly tears, ye fall like rain—
Of loving one who loves again,
Douglas?

Do thy fingers in her curls,
Douglas,
Wind themselves like threads of pearls,
Douglas?
Once my hair was softly told:
"Curls, ye are my sunlight's gold."
Now their light is dead and cold,
Douglas.

I can love no other one,
Douglas.
My earth owns no other sun,
Douglas.
Other lovers fortune gave;
Their love sank in thy love's wave.
None my heart has room for, save
Douglas.

AT THE JUDGMENT.

Stand up at the bar of judgment, O saint, in your blood-bought calm.
For me is the stern "Depart from me;" for you the victor's palm.
But answer, in the Presence where the purest hold their breath,
Whose tempter hand first pointed me the path that leads to death?

Who came in my boyish innocence, when holy thoughts were mine,
And under the plea of friendship held out the red, red wine?
You knew the demon in its dregs, and that its fatal clasp
Once fastened on my pliant heart would never loose its grasp.

O ye who have felt its burning, is there greater hell than this—
To feel its madness in your veins, and lack the wine-cup's kiss?
O prince of demons, who could hold the cup to beardless lips;
O maddest, weakest of mankind, who of its nightshade sips.

And when after days of struggle I had
almost burst its chain,
With your fatal gift of eloquence you
wove the spell again.
But you repent, you say; Ah, me! *your*
pardon that insures,
But I am curst while life, — nay, while
eternity endures.

O God! my awful punishment too heavy
is to bear.
Give me one little moment back that
Thou mayst hear my prayer.
"Ye would not come;" O God, I know
—the words ring in my heart;
I have no fellowship with Thee; hast
Thou not said "Depart?"

I must go on to my darkness, and you
to Heaven's own light;
Where the shadow of His presence
falls there shall be no more night.
Darkly it comes to meet me, the doom
I richly merit;
The golden New Jerusalem no drunk-
ard can inherit.

O demons, come ye crowding up to
work on me your will?

"He that is filthy"—hear them hiss—
"let him be filthy still."
O rocks and mountains, fall on me and
hide me from the light.
O gaping, hungry hell, I come into thy
endless night.

THE QUESTIONER OF THE SPHINX.

O woman Sphinx, so grim and great,
'Mid thy drifting desert sands,
Pity a restless woman's state,
And stretch out helping hands.

I listen at thy great, dumb lips
Till the mystic whisper come,
As mothers wait for the tardy ships
That bring their sailor home.

My heart pants, O oracle,
So passionless, cold, and wise.
The pain of which the earth is full
Has never dimmed thine eyes.

And yet thou knowest; and I come,
For my hot heart will not rest.

O proud lips, be no longer dumb,
  Thy secret is unguessed.

By the dear secret that I seek
  No continent's heart is stirred;
No sibyl waits to hear thee speak;
  And yet I must be heard.

Now whisper, clearly and full,
  And thy woman's nature prove;—
Say, does he love me, Oracle,
  Or will he ever love?

Oh, answer, dread one, I pray.
  With thee I have dropped my pride.
Ah, no sound came; I went away,
  My heart unsatisfied.

THE ROBIN'S WOOING.

In the winsome days of springtime
  When the trees were white with bloom,
And the song-birds, wandering northward,
  Sang of sweet spring flower's perfume,
Came a robin to my window
  Seeking in my fruit trees room—

Room to build his cunning cottage;
Such a cosy little nest,
Where could nestle all his birdlings,
And the father's heart could rest,
Coming home with sweet contentment
To the dear ones he loved best.

It may be he liked the flowers
In my little garden there,
Where his namesake, bright wake-robin,
Charmed him with her petals fair;
And the trailing sweet arbutus
Cast her fragrance on the air,
And the delicate spring-beauties
Blushed at blooming everywhere.

Or perhaps the fruit tree's blooming
Filled him with a sweet surprise,
And recalled a robin's memories
Of a southern paradise,
Where, for houris, fairer songbirds
Lit the dark with starry eyes,
And eclipsed the minstrel's music,
Singing to the evening skies.

Maybe no such wayward fancies
Touched the busy robin's thought;
And perhaps nor flowers nor blossoms
Had the birdie's notice caught.

But perhaps the tall tree's curving,
And the leaning of the shade,
Or the sense of human nearness—
Not too close to make afraid,—
Caught the wavering robin fancy
And his bird decision made.

With a twitter at my window,
For a birdie's sweet farewell,
Robin quivered on the branches
Till a shower of petals fell—
The soft snowfall of the summer—
And went—whither? Who can tell?

My wake-robin bloomed and faded,
Drooped its petals, snowy white,
Till they turned to red and purple
In the teardrops of the night,
As the raindrops turn to rainbows
The pale pencils of the light.

But the day that showed my blossom
Drenched and broken on the ground,
Brought me back my other robin
And the sweetheart he had found.

Then, oh, such a joyous trilling,
Such a melody of mirth,
As perhaps the birds of Eden
Caroled o'er the new-born earth,

When the angels sang its beauty,
And the herald stars its birth.

And I listened, idly trying
To pretend I understood
All the mystic words of music
Of those warblers from the wood,
All the melody of language
Of those wanderers from the wood.

And I thought I heard him telling
How the thought of her had stirred
Longing for a lovely home nest
Fit for such a dainty bird.
While her little trills of music
Answered every loving word.

But the daintiness of wooing
Her who was already won,
All the lovely sweet bird language
Warbled gaily in the sun,
Chanted softly at the sunset,
Till the building was all done—

Is beyond my human telling.
Fancy cannot catch the glee
Of those warblings from the ether,
Wafting down so merrily;
Nor translate to human language
Song-scenes of a life so free.

Maybe when the birds of Eden
  Caroled in the leafy grove,
Adam caught the birdlike meaning,
  Understood the words of love;
Traced the windings of the network
  That the wandering fancy wove.

Ah, but now we can but measure
  By our hearts the birdie's song;
Find the echo of our own love
  In its chant so sweet and strong;
While our heart-strings thrill responsive
  To the yearning of the song.

So, although the words are foreign
  And the melody unknown,
Yet the love in robin's bosom
  Finds an answer in our own;
And his sweet resistless wooing
  Charmeth not his mate alone.

And if any earthly maiden
  Could be wooed so daintily,
If a heart with love's pain laden
  Could pour forth its love so free—
She could ne'er withstand its pleading,
  If it pled so wistfully.

My thoughts are where myself would be.
Were self as thought, and both full-plumed for flying,
Both would be with you in reality,
And self and thought forget their woful sighing.
So swift I'd fly, so joyously, so lightly,
The star that shines above your window nightly
Should shine this night above my head also,
And all my thoughts of you your thoughts should know.
Do you wish, dearest, that my wish were true,
That through the twilight I could fly to you?

THE BRIDAL.

I sought my love with a step as light,
As free from sorrow,
As morn just risen from the breast of night
Could wish to borrow.

For my love would rest
On her husband's breast
To-morrow.

The door was shut, but the blinds were wide,
When, blithe and smiling,
I asked them how was my bonnie bride
The morn beguiling;
And how away
The slow hours' stay
Was whiling.

I thought no harm though the lips that spoke
Were white, unsteady;
And the voice that answered almost broke:
"Your bride is ready.
For to-morrow's vow,
Her deep love now
Is steady."

They led me then to her chamber bright,
Where lay, sun-flooded,
A slender shape, draped all in white,
The dead eyes hooded.
My own love, my pride,

Death claimed as his bride.
The fiend-blooded!

So beautiful! And so far from me!
Lie down, wild sorrow.
Death claims her beauty, she his bride must be,
His horrors borrow.
And the worms shall rest
On her snow-white breast
To-morrow.

OCTOBER.

O rare October, in thy golden mood
Thou crownest the year with royal, burning glory;
With gold and crimson set'st on fire the wood;
And skies are won to tell the lovely story.

Soft as a baby's breath, the fragrant air
Beguiles the bright leaves to their own undoing;
Like flecks of sunshine they fall everywhere;
Not lost to yield to such a gentle wooing.

Now you can hear, far off, the dreamy chant
Of some late bird, warmed into ecstasy;
Then feel the warm sun on your cheek, and pant
To soar and sing like him; like him be free.

The lingering peaches their soft cheeks are turning
To the warm kisses of the loving sun.
Hot glows the grape, with wine of fire burning,
Wooing October the year's sweets has won.

The year has rounded to its full completeness;
The hush of rest has fallen everywhere;
The winds are dreaming, heavy with much sweetness;
The glory and the richness flood the air.

O ripe October, when thy golden haze
Lies over hill and river like a dream,

Would heaven would make immortal thy sweet days
In all the magic of their mellow gleam.

O rare October, wine of all the year,
I quaff thy brimming sweetness eagerly.
Sweet Indian Summer, idly dallying here,
Oh, when thou diest, thou diest so gloriously.

THE RED ROSE.

The flower of love in her garden,
I am red to my deep heart's core.
I bend when the breeze sweeps o'er me,
And look through the open door.

Down the hall she comes in her beauty,
As fair as the new-born day;
A rose of love in her bosom,
That had not bloomed yesterday.

There's a quick step on the pathway,
And my tallest petal stirs;

He stands in the open doorway
And his head bends over hers.

O human hands close clasping,
O human lips that meet,
What is this wondrous feeling
That you seem to find so sweet?

Now over the waiting threshold
They pass from my eager sight,
And into the gathering shadows
They carry the sweet love-light.

Oh, brave is life in the garden,
And free is the light wind's kiss;
By my fragrance but I love it!
Yet — perhaps there's greater bliss.

MY DEAD HOPE.

Sweet hope, farewell.
Once, cherished in my bosom,
I held thee dearer than all earthly things;
Now thou art dead as any withered blossom
The cold wind to earth's sorrowing bosom flings.

Hope, art thou dead?
No more my sweet consoler?
Thou sweetest lover Heaven ever gave,
Thou liest on my empty bosom, colder
Than the first frost upon a new-made grave.

Dear hope, farewell.
What shall I do without thee?
I wish my weary life were wrecked with thee.
Thou liest dead, with all my joys about thee,
And what have light and life to do with me?

Oh hope, farewell.
The whole earth is unreal.
Only the cold words live that stopped thy breath,
The strong, brave soul longs for its bright ideal;
My heart has only strength to long for death.

So hope, farewell.
Without thee 'tis not living.

'Twas for thy sake I was in love with life.
Heaven sent thee death; be generous, Heaven, in giving,
And in hope's grave for me shall end earth's strife.

Sweet hope, farewell.
Not Heaven's self were Heaven
And thou away. O Heaven, hear my prayer:
Grant, if to me thine entrance key is given,
That I may find my sweet hope waiting there.

CONFIDENCE.

My Maybird nestled close unto my heart
And sang to me a happy, happy song;
And told me how that joy had grown a part
Of her own self, and would be, all life long.
And whispered wonders of a love most rare,

While I could watch the rainbow in her eyes;
And smiled as if she saw, in promise fair,
The outlook of a dawning paradise.
O wondrous love, how strong thy power must be
To win this many-fibred heart to thee.

SEPARATION.

Away from thee! And I must still live on.
Live on, away from thee,
Till weary time itself at last be gone,
And then — eternity.

Eternity of woe and loneliness
In every lagging hour;
And memory's sharp spur to love's distress,
That goads with growing power.

I thought I held thy image in my heart,
Forever mine to be.

But now I know, since we have lived apart,
Thy image is not thee.

I cry to Heaven; but there comes between
Me and the listening skies,
Thy face; and all the stars that downward lean
Are but thy loving eyes.

Soft through the branches comes thy voice to me;
And then I start awake,
And know the silence that must ever be
Thy voice will never break.

Till youth is gone; and then till old age comes;
Still thou wilt not be here.
A hundred altars in a hundred homes,
But none that holds me dear.

However long the wheel of time shall turn
Thou wilt not be more near.
The longing in my bosom still must learn
The solace of a tear.

To half forget in dreams, then wake again
Still to that agony;
To live long years clasped close by that fierce pain;—
Must that be life to me?

Could I forget — life were a waste of sand.
Yet what does memory give?
Thy face, thy longed-for kiss, thy clasping hand.
O God! and still I live.

Upon my heart the slow years shall distil
Their lingering drops of pain,
And all the chalice of my life shall fill
With slowly blighting rain.

The shadow falls; and yet 'tis thy dear shade
That comes so dark and swift.
Life stretches on; shall I be then afraid?
Or take pain as thy gift,

And through the darkness which no light can part,
Clasping thy memory,

The sickening, weary tugging at the heart
Shall all be borne for thee.

Thou art not helped although I should endure;
Thou wilt not know; yet I,
Once having known a life so good and pure,
Should nobler be thereby;

Should show my heart that I would rather far
Suffer this eating pain,
Than that my life be freed from this deep scar,
And thou come not again.

THE SHAPE OF A KISS.

Shape belongs to things material,
How shall I give to this ethereal,
Airy, transient thing of bliss
Such a property as this?
Now it melts upon the mouth
Like a zephyr of the south,
Shapeless, formless, word-defying,
Scarcely born before 't is dying,

In a breath dissolved and fled,
Like dream-music quickly sped,
In the longing heart begotten,
Scarce remembered, ne'er forgotten,
Nothing kin to square, triangle,
Ellipse, or the shapes that dangle
From the rounding chalk and string,—
Why this is a spirit thing!
Have you never felt it thrill
All your pulses, like the trill
Of a wild bird's caroling
Long before you knew 'twas spring?
Have you never felt it rush
From the bounding heart and push
All your poised control aside
Till the heart was satisfied,
That yet clamored still for more,
Till for very shame forbore?
Have you felt it fall as light
On your cheek as shadow night,
Gone before your lashes lift,
Shy as swallow, and as swift?
Fine, impalpable as mist
Which the Autumn sun has kissed;
Like an elfin touch that stirs
Not the fairy gossamers;
Like the thistle-blooms that wheel
In a wind too fine to feel;

Like a filmy cloud's eclipse
Of the sunny heaven's lips;
Like an angel's folded wing
'Round his quivering harp-string;
Like a baby's coaxing prayers
That beguile you unawares;
Like a thought from heart to heart
Of the spirit would a part.—
Lover, looking in her eyes
Where a mimic heaven lies,
Stay your heart's delirious thrill,
Tell us listeners, if you will,
If there any likeness is
To this elfin of a kiss?
Ah, your inspiration's gone,
With the waiting kiss 'tis flown;
Foolish man, recall your bliss,
There is nothing like a kiss.

FALSE.

I must give up my lover;
  I must forget his smile
Now he is pledged to another.
  Mine such a little while.

Never mine, you will tell me,
  If he so false can prove.

Ah, but my heart was trustful,
Nothing its trust could move.

Now I must not remember
His words, his look, his tone,
The touch of his hand on my hand—
Ah, then he was my own.

Am I a woman truly?
They used to call me proud.
Can I not bear what a woman must,
And never cry aloud?

It was his deed to leave me,
He cares not for me;
Heart of a woman, rally;
Scorn him as he scorns thee.

Oh, how I long to see him,
Long for his old fond glance;
How the close clasp of his fingers
Would make my fond heart dance.

Was that he passed the window?
O foolish heart, give place,
'Tis another woman's lover,
Who wears thy lover's face.

His heart is all gone from thee;
Is not the heart the man?

Forget not you are a woman.—
Reason back love who can.

My heart's passed from my keeping;
And what is done, is done;
'Tis false to me in my trouble,
'Tis doubly true to one.

I think pride left my bosom
When love had entered in.
Sweet love, I banish thee my heart,
Put pride where thou hast been.

And, mocking shadow lover,
Thee I forbid my heart.
Thou hast brought sorrow on me,
'Tis more than time to part.

Shadow and substance leave me;
What has earth left for me?
O heaven! a tide of memories
Forever mocking me.

And for one look of yielding,
One loving glance—but one—
I were bankrupt in woman's pride.—
O heart, we are undone.

Who shall forbid me
The memory of that hour?
Destiny outdid me,
But memory is power.
Evermore through the night
Glow thy sweet eyes;
Still does the morning light
Bring low replies.
Ever shall dreams be bright
Till memory dies.

PRO AND CON.

All unawares my heart
Has slipped my hold.
Reason would play her part,
But reason's cold.

What shall I do, alack!
With my wild rover?
Tears will not win her back
To her safe cover.

O thou wilt find, my heart,
Nothing but pain.
Thou shalt have all the smart,
Naught of the gain.

Wayward and restless still,
  Dost thou not feel
How weak is human will
  'Gainst love's appeal?

What dost thou hope for, fool?
  Love's happiness?
When thou hast been to school
  To sharp distress

Thou wilt lament the years
  When thou wert wise;
When thou wert strange to tears
  And laughed at sighs.

Regrets shall shake thy deep;
  Tumults appal;
Love, now so sweet, shall steep
  His sweets in gall.

Do thou of love beware,
  Mad heart of mine.
Let others know its snare,
  Make prudence thine.

What dost thou say, my heart?
  Make answer, come.
Hast weakness of thy part
  Smitten thee dumb?

THE HEART ANSWERS.

Farewell the life I led
When I was free,
Ere all my veins had bled,
Sweet love, for thee.

Sweet were the careless rhymes
Of childhood's heart;
Sweeter, a thousand times,
Love's keenest smart.

Dear were the happy days
Of liberty;
Dearer to sing the praise,
Dear love, of thee.

Shall I have nothing now
But love's unrest?
Still on my knees I vow
Sweet love is best.

Love's "no" is pain, you say.
I know it well.
Love's pain has a way
Too sweet to tell.

Shadow and sorrow flit
'Round love's dear head;

What would life say to it
If love were dead?

Bring all the clouds that lower
O'er love's dread birth;
Bring all the storms that dower
Its lot on earth.—

Say you that love's dread path
Is tempest riven?
That fate in maddest wrath
Makes men love-driven?

Love wounds; I know it well;
Yet 'tis God-given.
Loveless fiends know but hell;
'Tis love makes Heaven.

STARLIGHT.

Pure beam of a heaven-born planet,
Come from a world so far
That a thought can scarcely span it—
The space to that distant star—
As thou piercest so swift and sweetly
The darkness of the night,

And flingest down so fleetly
The burden of thy light,
Say, dost thou catch the sadness
Of tearful human eyes,
Or feel their joyful gladness,
Uplifted to the skies?
Do the tiny, slender star-beams
Bear back to thy bright home
Some story of the far gleams
Of the world to which they come?

THOUGHTS OF GOD.*

How shall I think of God,
The Eternal, Infinite?
Can earth to Heaven nod
And bid it come to sight?
O mighty Shadow floating o'er my life,
Calm for Thy great reflex the waves of strife.

I can but think of Him.
Vaguely my heart is stirred;
As in the forest dim
The music of a bird
Comes nestling down into your heart of hearts

From out the silence, and the quick love starts.

So sometimes, like a voice
Out of the sunbeam's heat,
Making the heart rejoice
And the quick pulses beat,
Comes some sweet influence, and I am stirred
As if some heavenly voice indeed I heard.

Sometimes I long to breathe
His breath in the sweet air;
I go where soft winds wreathe,
And feel He just was there,
But passed, and left a sunbeam in his track,
And subtle sweetness as His breath comes back.

When the deep organ rolls,
And voices chant the hymn,
When passion fills all souls,
And eyes with tears are dim,
One needs must be held captive and rejoice,
But Oh, 'tis but the echo of His voice.

Say you He is the Sun
That shineth on our hearts,
That He and love are one,
From peace He never parts—
It is too vague; I want a living heart
To beat 'gainst mine; nor know the beats apart.

How shall I think of Him?
What image does He wear?
We are His image dim,
But none His glory bear.
I picture forth His image and His state,
But wake to find 'tis but a man made great.

It is not great enough.
God, show Thyself to me.
No tempests were too rough
If they but showed me Thee.
I want Thy touch; Thy kiss upon my soul.
Thy heart so close my passion could control.

Sometimes I seem to be
In His own arms held fast.

O dream too shadowy,
Thy glorious vision passed.
The dream of water held to thirsty lips:
The cup dashed down ere one its freshness sips.

Will the day ever come
When I shall know Thee, Lord,
As children know their home,
As sons their father's word?
For nothing will content, till, as Thou art,
I know Thy image and Thy love by heart.

When my hope is fulfilled,
My longing love at rest,
My ceaseless yearnings stilled
In peace upon Thy breast,
When I wake with Thy likeness, by Thy side,
O mighty God, I shall be satisfied.

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* Once published in *The Young Churchman* under a different title.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

Soft lie the dark shadows upon the green hills
Way over beyond the river.
And oh, but contentment my bosom fills
Now I have come back forever.
O my fair river, my beautiful river,
Now that I stand on your shore,
My woes to your waves the dark shadows deliver.
Sweet river, I'll wander no more.

So sweetly the sound of your musical flowing
Stole over the distance to me,
I longed for the sight of your green willows growing
Down towards your mirroring sea.
O my fair river, my beautiful river,
Watching your curve as of yore,
Your waves murmur peace as they flow down forever.
Dear river, I'll wander no more.

How throng the swift memories, borne
on your bosom,
Darkling and silvery come.
Silence, my heart, let forgetfulness
blossom.
Peace, weary heart, you're at home.
O my dear river, my beautiful river,
Love was the message you bore;
Now bring me rest, O most generous
giver.
My river, I'll wander no more.

A GIRL'S PRAYER.

O Death, come woo me.
Life is too long,
Love a strange song;
Earth doth undo me.

O world of dreaming,
When one awakes
All thy spell breaks;
Joy is but seeming.

Love seemed unending;
But it is dead.
Come in its stead,
Sadness befriending.

Thy black wine quaffing,
  Peace would be mine;
  Peace—more divine
Than all earth's laughing.

Fold thy strong pinions;
  Take to thy breast
  Her who would rest
In thy dominions.

Cold is thy breath, king,
  But it is sweet;
  Peace is complete;
Art thou the death-king?

Dimmer my sight grows,
  And my ears ring;
  How the stars sing.
How pale the light grows.

The wind is steady.
  Death, what is this?
  Is it thy kiss?
Well, I am ready.

ROWING.

Come, row me up the river,
The evening is so fair;
And where the willows shiver
And the soft shadows quiver,
While peace is in the air,
I'll lull me into sweetest calm;
Beauty for care; for sorrow, balm.

How restful is this feeling;
The soothing has begun;
Into the quiet stealing;
The river has its healing
For every troubled one.
Stoop faster to the dripping oars,
Beyond the bend are lovelier shores.

How soft the western heaven;
The sunset's flush is dead,
But softer hues are given,
The dove-like hues of even,
In brighter colors' stead.
But oh, how fast the memories throng
Upon me, as we glide along.

Here is the tree that ever
A noble landmark stood,
Wine-wreathed, beside the river,
Suggesting still forever
That same-shaped sacred wood.
The great green cross outspreads its arms
In blessing over quiet farms.

Their is no moon in heaven;
Only the quiet stars
Their calmer light have given
To light this shadowy even
And hide the daylight scars.
And floating down from yonder hill,
The sad cry of the whip-poor-will.

And now our way is wending
Where two great sweeping folds
Encircle in their bending
A silver lake, deep blending
The shadows that it holds.
Draw in the oars and float at rest
Upon the tranquil water's breast.

Clear dark, so fit for dreaming,
And peacefulest hill-slope,
And water faintly gleaming—

Your comfort is but seeming
For I am done with hope.
The river flows on peacefully,
But from myself I cannot flee.

When dear hope has departed,
And dearer love is dead,
Let not the empty-hearted
Think that where love has parted
He shall be comforted.
Give me the oars; sad memory,
I must not dally here with thee.

THE GREAT IDEAL.

Unless the heart be lifted up
Above all earthly things,
However full its earthly cup
It little blessing brings.

Set free thy heart from eating cares.
What does it all avail?
Thy peace is crumbling unawares;
Thy happiness will fail.

It is too great a price to pay,
Perpetual unrest,

For that which hardly lives a day,
And leaves thee still distrest.

Lift up thy thoughts to things that live,
The sky is overhead,
And ask of Heaven to forgive
A heart disquieted.

Last night I wandered toward the west,
Restless and full of care,
Through all the noisy town's unrest,
Breathing its smoky air.

Until at last I raised my eyes;
The crescent moon's soft light
Shone calmly in the peaceful skies
Above the grey twilight.

My heart was calmed. I knew above
The noise and stir and fret,
In His own calm, the God of Love
Was ruling o'er us yet.

His peace is on us when on Him
Our wandering thoughts are set;
His light shines on our eyelids dim.
But oh, our hearts forget.

Still through the twilight mists are seen
The shadows of the real;
Above, transparent and serene,
The beautiful ideal.

Still chants the earth her troubled hymn;
And still, in shining calm,
Before her eyes, with weeping dim,
The wonderful I Am.

SONG.

Oh, love, like a wheel, goes rushing the rounding earth over,
And all are rolled down who are found in the path of the rover,
And heaven and earth seem awhirl in the eyes of the lover.

Oh, love, like a light, comes blinding the eyes that are mortal,
Like a sheeted white light flashing out from the heavens' own portal.
When it dies in the night does not even eternal seem mortal?

Oh, love, like a song, comes witching
men's hearts with its ringing,
And nothing seems joy but its breath of
delirious singing,
And sadder than death is the sigh that
its echo is flinging.

Oh, love, like a breath, comes kissing
soft cheeks with its sighing,
Ay, fragrant and sweet as the wind over
wild roses flying;
Like a ship in the tropics becalmed
seems the soul at its dying.

Oh, love, like a flame, comes warming
all hearts with its glowing,
And hearts are ablaze in its warmth as
they follow its blowing,
But colder than death are the ashes
burnt out at its going.

Oh, sweet is love in its undreamed,
glorious morning,
But death seems slow to the heart that
feels its scorning.

SPRING AGAIN.

Warm and laughing, a perfect day:
Golden sun in a sky of blue;
Grass a-blowing the quick wind's way
Shows the violets purpling through.

Birds a-thrill with the joy of life,
Swelling each little eager throat;
Singing—half for the little wife,
Most for the joy of the bursting note.

Air as fragrant as seraph's lips,
Delicate, fresh as a blossom weaves.
Sunlight suffering slight eclipse
By the shadows from baby leaves.

Cat-bird, cat-bird, rolic once more;
Spring and youth in your throat run riot.
Ah, how the liquid notes outpour;
Life in your veins scorns to be quiet.

Robin, robin, with hopping leaps,
Puff' out your breast in saucy power—
Strange that the bird most joyous, keeps
A sad little song for the sunset hour.

So, is it love in the breast that glows,—
Or does the passionate heart of youth
Come again when the south wind blows?
Is winter delusion, spring the truth?

Who cares? Whistle, red-bird, again.
"It's easier," the wee wren sings.
Even the sad earth has no pain
For the bird, or the heart, with wings.

Creation's rapture's new each year;
God's own enthusiastic mood
Comes down on us when skies grow clear,
And we, too, echo, It is good.

The herald morning stars still sing;
Our rose, the fair, faint dawn, is given:
And to old Earth the new springs bring
The deathless youth of older heaven.

Thou hast covered the dawn with thy skirts, O sorrow;
The print of thy footsteps lies deep in the sides of the hills;

The earth knows thy shadow, thou
shut'st it out from the sun.
Under thy heavy hand all the tints of
the morning are faded.
The heart croucheth down; it hideth
itself in the desert;
It sayeth, Ah, safety is here; I shall
never be found of affliction.
Thou trackest thy prey; thou comest on
him in the sunlight;
Thy victim is stricken; his lips are
bowed down to the dust;
Night covers his head, and grief is the
home of his spirit;
The cry of his soul goeth forth in the
infinite stillness.
Then is the heart sick for God; it crieth
upon Him:
Help Thou, for there is none other;
help Thou, O Jehovah;
For Thy wings are swifter than sor-
row's; Thy shadow is healing;
Yea, let sorrow herself dwell with me,
if Thou wilt but hear.
Then cometh peace to the soul, God's
balm on the spirit;
Yea, His gracious peace His hand
reacheth down from His heaven.

Over that peace even sorrow herself
has no power.
For its depths are the depths of His
love; its calm is Jehovah's.
Yea, He is our Peace, and sorrow is
but His bondservant.
If thou His ambassador art, O Heaven-
sent Sorrow,
To treat for His peace, if thou dost
come down from the heavens,
His high chamberlain, to lead us away
to His presence,
Then welcome the grasp of thy hand,
the tread of thy footstep,
The tears of thine eyes, heavy-lidded;
we open our hearts,
If thou, through the infinite spaces,
wilt lead us to God.

THANKSGIVING.

Father, for this, my answered prayer,
I thank Thee fervently;
For what am I that Thou shouldst care
To give my wish to me?

Thou from whose hand the cradled suns
Sing back Thy glorious praise,
And teach the white, moon-mothered ones
The splendor of Thy ways,

Whose ears the archangel songs salute,
While earth's most mighty hymn
Goes choiring through the spaces mute
To join the Seraphim,

And Heaven, her golden curtain spread,
Hangs high her cloud of pearls,
And noon and morning blend, and shed
New odors from new worlds;

And yet Thy Father-heart of love
O'erlooks the crystal sea,
And gives my prayer the power to move
That heart to answer me.

O wondrous heart of God! In Thee
Undreamed-of treasures lie;
Not filled by all infinity,
Yet swayed by such as I.

He holds me with the mighty Hand
That sent the planets on;
The eye that spaced Orion's band
Guides me into His dawn.

Then let the incense of my praise
Find out a path to Thee.
Teach Thou my heart a hundred ways
To thank Thee fervently.

I thank Thee for the answered prayer,
Granted so graciously.
I thank Thee for the sleepless care
That breaths Thy breath in me.

Spirit of God, whose mighty breath
Breathes over worlds unborn,
And from the chrysalis of death
Unfolds the wings of morn,

Brood o'er my heart; and from its night
Song out of sorrow bring;
Say Thou again, "Let there be light,"
Again the stars shall sing.

O Breath of God, blow full and strong
On all our troubled ways,
Till earth shall be one burst of song,
And life a hymn of praise.

THE FISHERMAN'S DAUGHTER.

Och, playmate sea, is this your silver
smilin'
Afther your sthormy night?
Shure ye are woman, all mankind be-
guilin,'
All rage, and thin all light.

Ah, whisht, mavourneen, have ye tidin's
for me
Of me dear fisher boy?
Even in sthorm ye know his likin' for
ye.
Where is me heart's dear joy?

Have ye kept faith wid him who trusted
to ye
And launched so brave, last night?
His father laughed and waved his old
hand to me
To ease me foolish fright.

"Eileen, he's weathered many a tougher
buffet;
An' faith! God's still in hiven.

His heart is warm; a fisher's boy can
rough it
When his maid's troth is given."

But we had words las' night; I am
quick-blooded—
Saint Pathrick wound me tongue—
An' long before your waves the shores
had flooded,
Me very heart was wrung.

Come back, me darlint! O acushla,
dearest,
Come back, come back, machree!
O shame o' maidens that I sint me
nearest
To such a cruel sea.

Ye met him, too, wid sthorms, ye
cruel ocean,
But could not drive him home,
The sthorm he left was such a wild
commotion.
O Denis, dearest, come.

Come back, an' oh, I'll be so gintle to
ye
Ye'll niver know me name,

And yet so lovin' wid ye whin ye woo me
Ye'll know I am the same.

O Denis, is it ye beyont the beaches?
His father, comin' here!
I'd run beyont where'er the deep sea reaches
For one word of me dear.

"Drowned," did ye say, Pat brought ye word this mornin'?
O God! me Denis dead!
Me last goodbye was but a cruel scornin.'
O sea, take me instead.

Take me away; I cannot bear its smilin'
Over the lad it holds.
Yet let me sthay; for oh, its wave beguilin'
Me dear, me dead, enfolds.

An' Oh, I tould ye that I did not love ye!
Wash out the words, O sea.
O love, by the great sky that binds above ye,
I have no worruld but ye.

* * * * * * *

Tin years! tin years! an' sthill ye hould me lover.
Ye are a cruel sea.
Not till God bids ye all your dead uncover
Can he come back to me.

"An' there was no more sea"—Is that God's sayin'?
Och! sorrowful for me.
In the great Home made ready for our stayin'
There shall be no more sea.

I love ye, sea; although ye have me jewel
And hould him back from me;
And in my sorrow long I thought ye cruel;
Yet sthill I love ye, sea.

Oh, in God's hiven, Denis, whin ye hould me
Close in your lovin' clasp,
Closer than yon grey waves that now enfold ye
In such a death-like grasp,

I think me heart will like to burst wid gladness.
Yet, in that ecstasy,
I'd want the sea; although it raved in madness,
Yet sthill I'd want the sea.

It shmiled below us whin ye said ye loved me;
And now for miny a year
'T has been your grave; and even that has moved me
To hould it sthill more dear.

An' so, me dear, although we'll be together
Just as we used to be,
An' 'twill be hiven, an' the hivenly weather—
Will God be vexed wid me

If I should sthill be lonesome for the wather?
He'll understand, machree,
That havin' been a fisherman's wild daughther
I'm homesick for the sea.

TOGETHER.

Thou and I, love, together
On some little wonderful isle.
All weathers were magical weather,
All moods were a smile.
Each even
A heaven,
Were we, love, together.

Thou and I, love, forever.
No matter how went the dull earth.
All life were a musical river,
And death but a birth,
Then never
To sever;
With thee, love, forever.

Thou and I, love, together,
And sorrow and gloom fled away.
My heart grows as light as a feather,
At thought of that day.
Flee, sadness;

Come, gladness;
And we, love, together.

Thou and I, love, together.
How madly I thrill with delight.
No tempest too stormy to weather,
Day leaps over night.
Ecstasy
Comes to me.
Love, we are together.

FINIS.

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